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natural and necessary. Only morons and cripples remain single. Though it is rare for people to renounce their home and property in old age, old men and women excessively attached to material goods come in for a good deal of criticism, and people often remark about them, 'Will they carry their wealth with them to the other world when they die?' It is at this time that their thoughts turn more to religion and to the destiny of their souls in the future life, and it is now that they generally undertake pilgrimages to holy places. In a sense the broad essentials of the philosophy of the *ashramas* can be said to permeate the life and thought of the Hindu villagers. The village Muslims share these social attitudes with their Hindu neighbours. With conversion to Islam they have changed their religious faith, but in the socio-cultural spheres of life they still continue to have more or less the same basic attitudes as the Hindus. In their family ethics and ideals the two groups demonstrate considerable similarity.

To the village people the necessity of both marriage and family is self-evident. It is necessary that the family line should be continued. A male heir must be left. An unmarried person past the marriage age is an object of pity. A couple without a son are unhappy. Childlessness and inability to produce a male child on the part of a woman often lead to a polygynous household. Marriage is regarded as essential among all the castes and social groups in the village. In a community of 2,494 persons, demographic survey reveals the presence of only two single persons—both women. One of these is a deaf-mute; the other has been a victim of epileptic fits from her childhood and has in addition the unenviable reputation of being a thief. For the clean-caste Hindus the continuity of the family line is necessary for a further reason. A male child must make a ceremonial offering of water to the spirits of his deceased parents and ancestors, without which their souls may not have peace. The untouchable castes as well as the semi-tribal groups also have this ritual in a modified form. The Muslims neither have this belief nor any attendant ritual, but they too share with the Hindus the sentiment against childlessness.

1. THE STRUCTURE OF THE FAMILY

The patrilineal and patrilocal elementary or joint family is the normal type of family unit met with in this part of rural India.

WEB OF FAMILY TIES

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

593 In general the attitude of the children towards their parents should be one of respect and obedience. Very early in his life a child must learn to act on the traditional norms of showing respect to different categories of people on the basis of their age and kinship status. The parents are entitled to the highest respect from the children; the latter must show it by touching their feet on ceremonial occasions. Between the father and the mother, the former symbolizes authority to a greater degree, while the constant association of the latter develops ties of sympathetic understanding between her and the children. Both must be respected, but of the two the father is feared much more. The mother is generally responsible for the upbringing of the children, but vigilance is also expected of the father, who must provide the corrective when too much leniency on the part of the mother begins to spoil the children. Of course the mother is responsible for the daily care of the children. She baths, clothes and feeds them. She looks after them during their illnesses. While she is doing her normal household work, she is expected to keep an eye on the children, and to ensure that they are kept away from mischief. Until they are about five years old, the life of the children centres around the mother. It is to her that they look for protection and help. 'When he is in a playful mood, the father may fondle the child; but it is the mother who attends to his daily routine.' 'The father,' it is said, 'loves the smiling child, but it is the mother who has to pacify it when it starts crying.'

[858] The nature of the parent-child relationship changes with the age and status of the children. The traditional themes of correct treatment during infancy and early childhood are very different from those of childhood and adolescence. Similarly, when the sons and daughters enter the phases of youth and subsequently of adulthood, the tone of the parent-child relationship undergoes a significant modification.

593 Traditional opinion regards a son as an asset; a daughter, a
● 842 liability. While a son 'belongs' to his parents, a daughter is bound eventually to go to some other family. Care of a daughter is regarded as 'watering a neighbour's tree'; you take all the trouble with it but its fruit goes to someone else. In a large family having many sons, a girl is definitely desired and welcomed. A family having too many daughters and no sons is unhappy, for a son is

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both a psychological and a ritual necessity. Notwithstanding this preference for sons, in actual practice no discrimination is observed in the treatment of children on the grounds of their sex.

As a rule infants are treated with affection. Until a child is four or five years old, it is mainly a responsibility of the mother. The mother nurses it whenever it starts crying indicating its desire to be fed. The child sleeps with its mother in the night and is at liberty to suck whenever it likes. Feeding of the child is primarily the mother's duty. However, when it is six to eight months old, elder sisters, female relations and male members of the household may start sharing this task with her by occasionally giving solid food to the child. While other relations give some food to the child occasionally, its attachment to the mother does not diminish in any significant way, as it is breast-fed by her until it is four or five years old. In teaching the child regular habits of sphincter control, standing, walking and speaking the mother's share is very considerable.

On the whole, an infant is the cause of delight to the family, and it is often fondled and carried about by the elders. They all invariably make funny faces and peculiar noises to make the baby smile, fondle it in many different ways, and find great enjoyment in imitating its meaningless sounds.

The situation radically changes after the child reaches the age of five or six years. Now the parents must be strong and should start disciplining it. At this stage the child finds the father an authoritarian figure and begins to fear him. The liberty that he was allowed during his early childhood is increasingly curtailed. Now the accent is on good behaviour and regular habits. The child is more frequently spanked for being troublesome. Absorbed in the care of a younger baby, the mother may often have to leave the elder child to spend most of his time in his own way. During the day-time he mostly plays out of doors with other children of his age-group. As he grows older the discipline becomes more and more difficult. At first he was punished for being 'troublesome' or for 'crying without reason', but now he has to distinguish clearly between things to be done and things not to be done. The child must be very particular about the latter. These include mostly urinating and defecating inside the house, demanding food and money at odd times too often, beating younger brothers and sisters, stealing, lying and using foul language. As a general rule, the